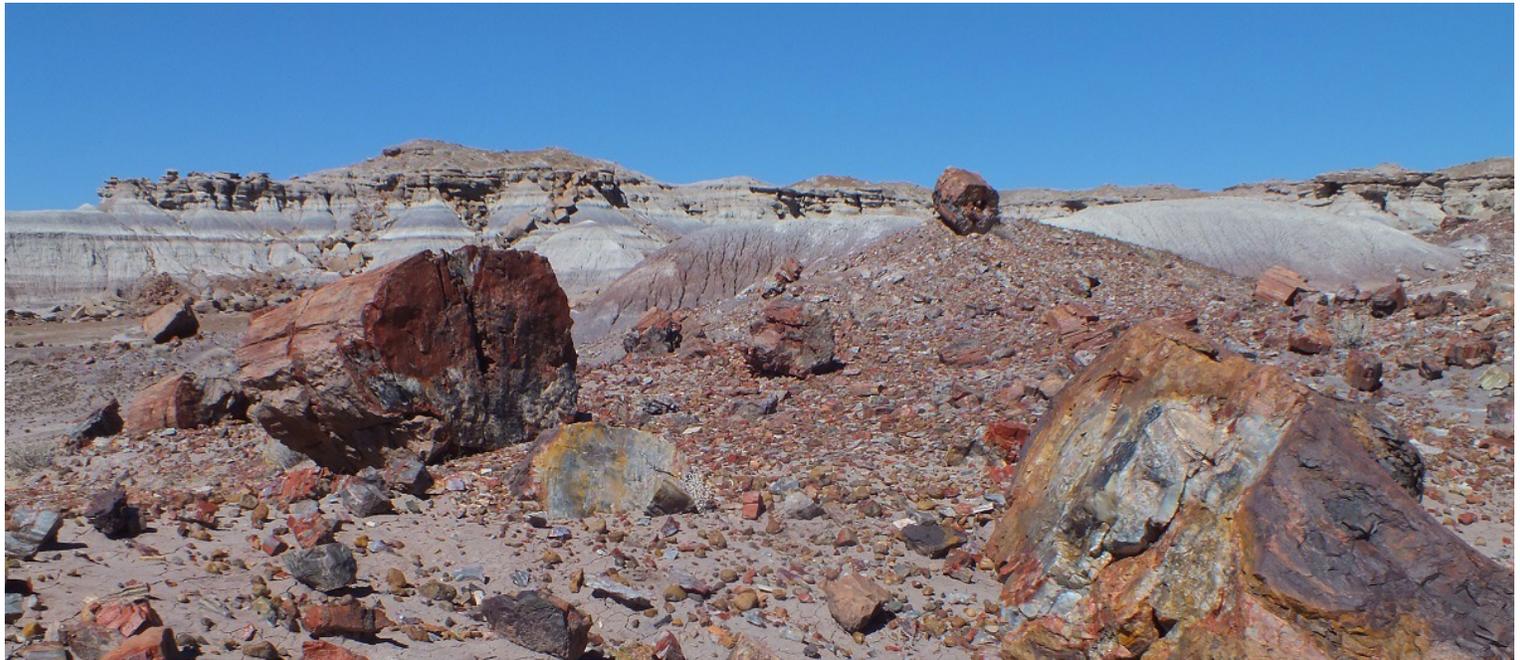


Off the Beaten Path Hikes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Petrified Forest National Park



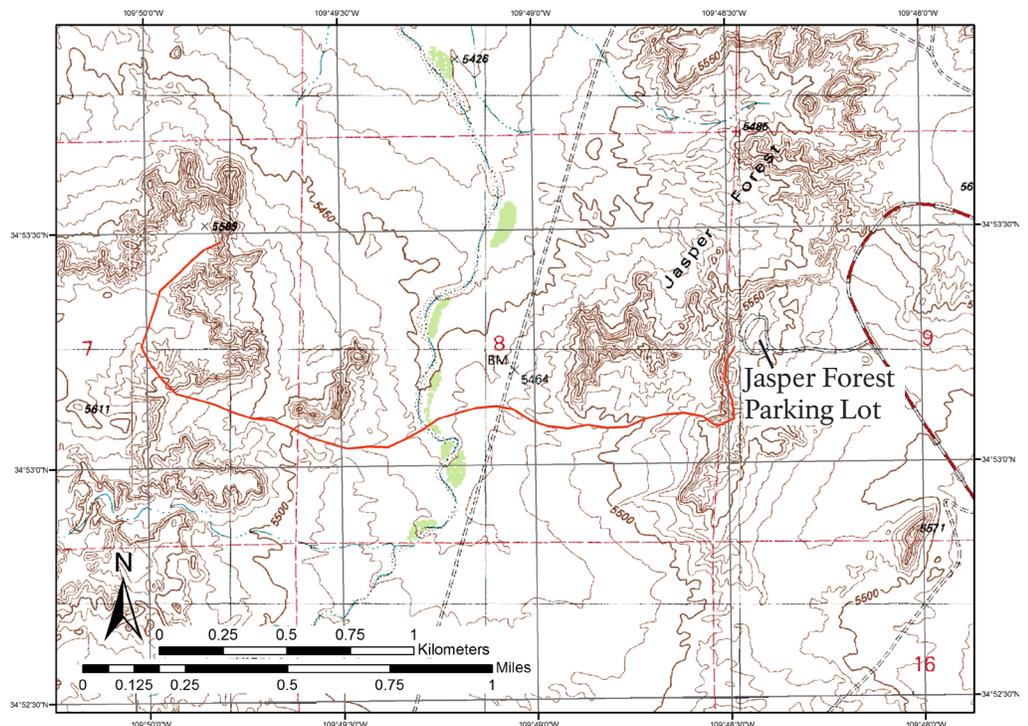
Brightly colored petrified wood in Jasper Forest

First Forest Point

2.1 mi (3.4 km)

This hike takes you from the Jasper Forest overlook parking lot south along the bluffs, then west through a portion of the Jasper Forest petrified wood deposit, and across a branch of Dry Wash. This hike also crosses a dirt road and a buried waterline that provides Rainbow Forest with water before you get to the wash. The road is not open for public use. On the other side of the wash, it climbs a gentle slope onto the prominent mesa directly west of Jasper Forest with a good view of the surrounding countryside. There are some petrified logs eroding out on the mesa top.

Please respect the visitors who follow you and leave all petrified wood, fossils, artifacts, and natural objects in their places.



Map Key
 Main Park Road
 Suggested Route

Enjoy your hike safely and protect the park

The following is a suggested route, not a trail, route finding skills will be used on this hike.

This walk, although not difficult or steep, does require sturdy shoes. The footing can be difficult at any time and this walk should not be attempted in wet conditions. Do not attempt this hike if lightning is in the area. Please take normal hiking precautions and bring food and water, sun protection, and navigation aids. Pack out whatever you packed in.

Park in the Jasper Forest overlook parking lot. Starting at the south end of the parking lot, walk south along the top of the steep bluffs until you come to a grassy slope that provides safe access down to the basin below. Choose your own route across the basin – if you bend your route slightly north at the bottom of the bluff as shown on the map, there is petrified wood almost all the way to the wash.

After crossing the wash, stay south of the smaller formation in order to align your route with the gentle slope to the mesa top. Turn slightly north as you climb the mesa – the best views and the petrified logs eroding out are on the east side of the north end of the mesa. Reverse your route to return to the parking lot.

Jasper Forest was originally called First Forest. Early visitors to the park arrived on trains to the now non-existent town of Adamana located northwest of Jasper Forest. These colorful logs were the visitors' first introduction to the vast deposits of fossilized trees in the area. Between the 1890's and the early 1900's visitors could take wagon, and later car, tours through the forest.

Many of the petrified logs in this area have already eroded out from the sandstone that entombed them for millions of years. This erosional process is still occurring and sometimes partially exposed logs are visible. (pictured right)

The geology and fossils you will see on this hike are about 217 million years old. They are remnants of an extensive river system that occurred during the Late Triassic epoch when the climate was subtropical and this land was located much closer to the equator.



View looking east towards Jasper Forest



Intact petrified log eroding out of the bluff



View looking north towards Pilot Rock